(e) whether such industrial corridors are placed in the regions of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on December 13, 2006 during *he visit of Prime Minister of India to Japan for cooperating in establishment of the 'Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor' (DMIC). M/s IL&FS has been engaged by Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion to prepare the concept paper for the project. The concept paper, after discussions with the Japanese Government is being aimed to be finalized by July 2007. The detailed project will be finalized thereafter. The overall investment outlay cannot be estimated at this stage. The Corridor is likely to pass through the States of NCT of Delhi, Haryana, UP, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The objective of the project is to delineate areas along the alignment of the Dedicated Freight Corridor between Delhi and Mumbai to provide good quality connectivity and other infrastructure like investment hubs comprising of industrial parks and estates, SEZs, agro-processing zones etc.

(e) to (g) The proposed Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor does not cover the regions of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.

Growth in exports

3661. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been steady growth in exports this year;

(b) if so, the Indian items which are in great demand in foreign countries, enhancing the export potential;

(c) what is the current percentage of trade deficit; and

(d) the steps taken to bring down trade deficit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Merchandise exports increased from US $ 103.1 billion during 2005-06 to US $ 124.6 billion in 2006-07 recording a growth of 21% during the last financial year. Data for the current financial year beginning April, 2007 is not available.

(b) According to the latest disaggregated data available for exports by principal commodities for the period April—Dec. 2006-07, Petroleum Products, Engineering Goods (including Machinery and Instruments, Manufacture of Metals, Primary and Semi-finished Iron and Steel and Non-Ferrous Metals); Drugs, Pharmaceuticals and Fine chemicals; and Electronic Goods were some of the major items that, in response to international demand, recorded an export growth of 20% or more.

(c) Trade deficit in 2006-07 was US $ 56.74 billion compared with US $ 40.37 billion in 2005-06.

(d) The Government does not propose to artificially restrict trade deficit as this may have an adverse impact on inflation.

FDI in Tobacco sector

3662. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any foreign companies applied for FDI in the Tobacco sector in 2005-06 and 2006-07.

(b) if so, the details of such companies and their country of origin;

(c) what special help such foreign companies have offered for Indian tobacco farmers;

(d) whether Government and Tobacco Board would guarantee the offers and promises; and

(e) the steps proposed to help our farmers and protect them from being exploited?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) As per the extant policy Foreign